

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing multiple level discounts on a first product to a customer who purchases at least one cross-marketed product,
5 said method comprising the steps of:
 awarding a first discount on the first product to the customer based on a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product;
 awarding a second discount on the first product to the customer based on a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product;
10 adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the first product; and
 awarding the total discount to the customer.
2. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 1
15 wherein the customer purchases the first cross-marketed product from a first merchant, and purchases the second cross-marketed product from a second merchant.
3. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 1
20 wherein the first product is a consumable good sold in multiple units, and the first, second, and total discounts are discounts on the price per unit of the consumable good.

4. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 3 wherein the consumable good is gasoline, and the first, second, and total discounts are discounts on the price-per-unit-volume of gasoline.

5 5. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 4 further comprising:

issuing an electronic coupon to the customer, said coupon providing a customer identification and a discount identification; and

storing the total discount in a discounts issued database which
10 associates the total discount with the discount identification.

6. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 5 wherein the electronic coupon is selected from the group consisting of:

a paper receipt with the customer identification and discount
15 identification encoded in a bar code imprinted thereon;

a paper receipt with the customer identification and discount identification encoded in a code number imprinted thereon;

a frequent shopper card with the customer identification and discount identification magnetically encoded thereon;

20 a prepaid card with the customer identification and discount identification magnetically encoded thereon;

a credit card with the customer identification and discount identification magnetically encoded thereon;

a radio frequency identification (RFID) device with the customer identification and discount identification encoded in a RF transmission;

5 and

a smart card.

7. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 6 further comprising the steps of:

10 presenting the discount for redemption at a gasoline station; and
reducing, by the gasoline station, the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the total discount.

8. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 7
15 wherein the step of presenting the discount for redemption at a gasoline station includes scanning an encoded bar code with a bar code scanner at a gasoline dispenser, and the method further comprises, after scanning the encoded bar code, the step of verifying the discount scanned from the bar code by comparing the scanned discount with the stored discount in the
20 discounts issued database.

9. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 8 wherein the step of verifying the discount also includes requesting the customer to enter a personal identification number (PIN).

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10. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 8 further comprising, after the step of storing the total discount in a discounts issued database, the steps of:

storing, in the discounts issued database, a maximum number of
10 gallons of gasoline to which the discount applies; and

storing, in the discounts issued database, a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount.

15 11. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 10 further comprising the steps of:

determining a value of the total discount redeemed;

verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than
or equal to the maximum discount allowed; and

20 verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount.

12. The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

storing the value of the discount redeemed in a discounts redeemed database; and

5 allocating portions of the discount redeemed to vendors of the first and second cross-marketed products according to predetermined criteria.

13. A method of providing a discount on a first product to a customer who purchases at least one cross-marketed product, said method comprising the steps of:

awarding a first discount on the first product to the customer based on a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product;

issuing a coupon to the customer, said coupon providing a customer identification and a transaction identification;

15 storing a discount amount in a discounts issued database which associates the discount amount with the customer identification and the transaction identification;

inputting by the customer in a subsequent transaction, the customer identification and the transaction identification;

20 retrieving the discount amount from the discounts issued database; and

reducing the price of the first product by the discount amount.

14. The method of providing a discount on a first product of claim 13 further comprising, after the step of awarding a first discount, the steps of:

awarding a second discount on the first product to the customer
5 based on a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product;
and

adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a discount amount on the first product.

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15. The method of providing a discount on a first product of claim 13 wherein the first product is gasoline, and the discount amount is a discount on the price-per-unit-volume of gasoline.

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16. A method of providing multiple level discounts on gasoline to a customer who purchases at least one cross-marketed product, said method comprising the steps of:

awarding to the customer, a first discount on the price-per-unit-
20 volume of the gasoline based on a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product;

awarding to the customer, a second discount on the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline based on a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product;

5 adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline;

printing a paper receipt for the customer with a customer identification and a discount identification encoded in a bar code thereon;

storing the total discount in a discounts issued database;

10 storing, in the discounts issued database, a maximum number of gallons to which the discount applies;

storing, in the discounts issued database, a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount;

scanning the encoded bar code with a bar code scanner at a gasoline dispenser;

15 verifying the discount scanned from the bar code by comparing the scanned discount with the stored discount in the discounts issued database;

reducing, by the gasoline station, the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the total discount;

determining a value of the total discount redeemed;

20 verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than or equal to the maximum discount allowed;

verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount;

storing the value of the discount redeemed in a discounts redeemed database; and

5 allocating portions of the discount redeemed to vendors of the first and second cross-marketed products according to predetermined criteria.

17. A method of providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on gasoline to a customer who purchases a cross-marketed product in a sales transaction, said method comprising the steps of:

10 awarding the price-per-unit-volume discount to the customer based on a purchase by the customer of a cross-marketed product;

issuing an electronic coupon to the customer, said coupon identifying the customer and the sales transaction;

15 storing the price-per-unit-volume discount in a discounts issued database which associates the discount with the customer and sales transaction;

storing, in the discounts issued database, a maximum number of volume units of gasoline to which the discount is applied;

20 storing, in the discounts issued database, a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount;

beginning a sales transaction by entering a customer identification
and a transaction identification at a gasoline dispenser at a gas station;

retrieving the price-per-unit-volume discount from the discounts
issued database;

5 reducing, by the gasoline station, the price-per-unit-volume of the
gasoline by an amount equal to the discount;

determining a value of the total discount redeemed;

verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than
or equal to the maximum discount allowed;

10 verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or
equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount; and

storing the value of the discount redeemed in a discounts redeemed
database.

15 18. The method of providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on
gasoline of claim 17 wherein a residual discount is stored in a residual
value database, and the method further comprises, after retrieving the
price-per-unit-volume discount from the discounts issued database, the
steps of:

20 retrieving the residual discount from the residual value database;
and

adding the residual discount to the price-per-unit-volume discount.

19. The method of providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on gasoline of claim 18 wherein the step of reducing the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the discount includes the steps of:

5 determining whether the discount is greater than or equal to the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline; and

 setting the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline equal to zero on a gasoline dispenser upon determining that the discount is greater than or equal to the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline.

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20. The method of providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on gasoline of claim 19 wherein the step of setting the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline equal to zero includes the steps of:

15 determining whether the dispenser is of a type that can set the price-per-unit volume to zero;

 setting the dispenser to the minimum price-per-unit volume that the dispenser allows, upon determining that the dispenser is of a type that cannot set the price-per-unit volume to zero; and

20 setting a sales transaction value of zero when the transaction is completed.